



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

Minutes of the Meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council
Friday, May 26, 2023; 1:00-2:15 PM
Held Virtually via MS Teams

Council Members Present:

x	Gabby Aranda-Pino	x	Sen. Dianne Hesselbien		Carrie Richard
x	Dr. Jolene Bowman	x	Denise Gaumer-Hutchison, <i>Chair</i>	x	Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez
x	Sen. Rachael Cabral-Guevara		Dr. Rosalyn McFarland		<i>Vacant</i>
x	Rep. Jodi Emerson	x	Amanda Medina-Roddy		<i>Vacant</i>
	Rachel Fernandez	ex.	Nerissa Nelson		<i>Vacant</i>

Staff Present: Jenifer Cole, WWC Executive Director; Margie Berkowitz, Sen. Hesselbien's office; Marissa Feller, Lt. Gov.'s office; Will Terry, Sen. Cabral-Guevara's office.

Public Present: Jessie Leonard, Director of Established Business Program & Services, WBDC

1) Call to Order - Denise Gaumer Hutchison, Chair

- Chair called the meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council to order at 1:06

2) Presentation and Q&A – Jessie Leonard, [Women's Business Development Center \(WBDC\)](#)

J. Leonard provided a presentation about WBDC and the work they do:

- WBDC works to advance women-owned and diverse-owned business in the supply chain.
- WBDC certifies businesses, similarly to county and state certifications. Helps to vet and validate the vendor.
- Brings attention to these businesses.
- Helps women-owned businesses build capacity, much like WWBIC, but without duplicating efforts of WWBIC. (WBDC does the certification. Then, connects the businesses to WWBIC for funding and training. WWBIC refers companies for certification.)

WBDC serves a nine-state Midwest region and is the largest Regional Partner Organization certifying Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBE) as a service provider for the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). The nine states include: Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin – focused on five major markets: Chicago, Kansas City, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and the Twin Cities. The benefit of certification is that corporate partners can search databases of certified business to diversify their supply chain. WBDC also helps companies create their pitch to talk about their business to share what is important to a corporation to advance contracts and gain clients.

Example: Worldwide LLC in Dodgeville (marketing company) – WBDC has been working with them, gotten some significant contracts with Disney & AT&T. Helped the owner with a pitch competition, through which she received an invite to work with Starbucks.

In 2022, WBDC certified 2,389 WBEs, which had \$21.59 billion in total revenue, employed 104,799 people, and had 20.99 years in business on average. WBDC also works to connect certified WBEs with corporate partners for contracting, supply chain provision, and growth. WBDC also works with corporate partners to:

- Provide guidance on developing and growing their supplier diversity programs.
- Increasing and strengthening their current diverse supplier pipelines.
- Providing specialized matchmaker and procurement programs.
- Highlighting the corporation's team as thought leaders and subject-matter experts.
- Enhancing reputation through support of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Networking and benchmarking with other WBDC corporate and public sector partners.

In Wisconsin, WBDC certifications grew from 100 to now close to 200. Before there were five major corporation partners, all located in Milwaukee. Now, that number is 11, and includes companies located Madison, Appleton, Racine, and Kohler, which supports supplier diversity. Partners with the State of WI with supplier certifications.

3) Discussion on WWC Budget Initiative: Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) Action

a) **Proposal to show support of reconsideration** – Chair Gaumer Hutchison reported that JFC removed the Women's Council's nearly \$100,000 budget initiative from the budget during their first executive session. Asked Council's legislators how the Council could request that JFC restore funding in the final budget. Rep. Emerson suggested sending a letter to JFC with the request to restore the initiative through an amendment and provide additional explanation about the importance of the funding. Council proposed that staff will draft the letter for Senators Cabral-Guevara and Hesselbein and Representative Emerson to sign and send to JFC members. Motion for the Council to take this action and for the legislative members to send the letter: A. Medina-Roddy; Second: Rep. Emerson; Approved unanimously.

4) Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- a) **February 24, 2023** – Motion to approve: Dr. Bowman; Second: G. Aranda-Pino; Approved unanimously.
b) **March 23, 2023 & April 28, 2023** – Motion to approve both months: Sen. Hesselbein; Second: Lt. Gov. Rodriguez; Approved unanimously.

5) Vote on Additional Executive Committee Member:

- a) **Nominee – Rachel Fernandez**
Motion to approve: Sen. Hesselbein; Second: Lt. Gov. Rodriguez; Approved unanimously.

6) Elect Two Officers: Vice-Chair and Secretary

- a) **Nominee for Vice-Chair** - Chair Gaumer Hutchison nominated Nerissa Nelson.
b) **Nominee for Secretary** - Chair Gaumer Hutchison nominated Amanda Medina-Roddy.
N. Nelson absent; however, had consented to the nomination. A. Medina-Roddy consented to the nomination.
Motion to approve nominated officers: Rep. Emerson; Second: Sen. Hesselbein; Approved unanimously.

6) Project Updates

- a) **MMIW Day of Awareness Wrap-up** – J. Cole provided report on behalf of R. Fernandez, and reported that the event went according to plan, well attended, and received good local media coverage. Chair Gaumer Hutchison added that it was an incredibly heart-wrenching and powerful event. Thanked R. Fernandez for all her work on the event and for J.Cole on assisting with coordination. Also, thanked Rep. Emerson for also attending.

- b) **Hmong Women's Story Cloth Exhibit** – J. Cole reported that the exhibit is still on display in the Capitol until June 9. Asked members to visit the exhibit, take photos, and send to her for sharing on social media. Exhibit will travel to Eau Claire in June for the Wisconsin Humanities board meeting and will be displayed at the Pablo Center into July. Thanked Rep. Emerson for making connection with Pablo Center staff. Asked for input about where it should travel to next.
- c) **Status of Women Report & Selection of Steering Committee Member** – J. Cole shared that first meeting of a possible steering committee for the 'Status of Women' research and report project is scheduled for June 26. Still working to solicit members and needs a representative from the Council to serve on the committee as a liaison for the Council. Chair Gaumer Hutchison nominated G. Aranda-Pino, who asked for more information. J. Cole will arrange a meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities of steering committee members.

7) Closing Remarks and Adjournment – Denise Gaumer Hutchison, Chair

Chair Gaumer Hutchison asked Council members if there was benefit for similar presentations to the one provided by WBDC. Council members agreed that similar presentation would be welcome at future meetings. Chair Gaumer Hutchison encouraged all to take a few moments to honor women who have led and served our country over the Memorial Day weekend and holiday.

Meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenifer Cole
Executive Director, Wisconsin Women's Council